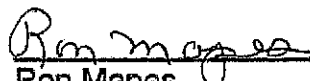

U.S. Route 20 Agriculture Work Group

Report to the Advisory Council



Ron Mapes
Chairperson



Mel Gratton
Advisory Council Representative



July 26, 2001

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
WORK GROUP HISTORY.....	2
MEETINGS	2
1993 Work Group Topics/Activities.....	2
1994 Work Group Topics/Activities.....	2
1995 Work Group Topics/Activities.....	2
1996 Work Group Topics/Activities.....	2
1997 Work Group Topics/Activities.....	3
1999 Work Group Topics/Activities.....	3
ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT IMPACT EVALUATION.....	3
CRITERIA.....	3
MEASURES & IMPACT ANALYSIS	3
RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS	4

Introduction

Public involvement has been an important component of the environmental impact and location design studies of alternative highway alignments in the Stephenson/Jo Daviess U.S. Route 20 corridor. The current IDOT studies include a structure, which has provided opportunities for public discussion and for review of engineering design and socioeconomic/environmental impact issues.

Beginning in 1993, IDOT scheduled a series of public information meetings. These meeting, usually conducted in an open house format, allowed IDOT staff and consultants to present periodic updates on engineering design and other project issues. Residents of the study area have been able to review the design proposals, and to address comments and questions to IDOT representatives.

To further encourage input from local citizens and interest groups, five Work Groups were established to represent specific areas of interest, and to identify potential impacts of a new four-lane highway in the region.

The first U.S. Route 20 Agriculture Work Group meeting was held in the fall of 1993. Discussion at this initial meeting focused on the identification of major potential impacts of highway construction on the agriculture community. Subsequent meetings over the next two years helped to refine these concerns, and addressed specific issues related to impacts of alternative alignments proposed by IDOT. Members of the Agriculture Work Group were able to hear presentations by and direct questions and comments directly to representatives from IDOT, engineering consultants and a variety of local, state and federal agriculture organizations. Valuable information concerning highway design, conservation issues, land acquisition procedures, etc. was presented at Work Group meetings. A special panel discussion format featured presentations by landowners who were affected by the construction of the U.S. Route 20 by-pass around Freeport.

During 1995-96 the Agriculture Work Group organized a series of subcommittee meetings for farmers and other property owners along alternative alignments within the U.S. Route 20 corridor. At these small, informal meetings, IDOT and engineering consultant staff presented detailed maps of the preliminary highway alignments – Irish Hollow, Longhollow, existing alignment (expressway) and Snipe Hollow – as engineering studies were completed. Property owners potentially affected by the preliminary alignments were able to work with engineers and designers to minimize negative impacts.

In 1997, the Agriculture Work Group activities began to focus on the identification of "core" agricultural impact issues raised during the U.S. Route 20 Public Involvement process. Through a series of mailings to Work Group members, a list of most critical impact concerns was verified, modified and refined. Work Group members were asked to rank the issues in order of importance. This resulted in a preliminary list of agricultural impact criteria, ranked in priority order, and weighted according to relative impact significance. From this list, the five most important criteria were selected as the basis for the Work Group's evaluation of the alternative alignments, and determination of the order of preference in terms of impact on agricultural resources and activities. Using impact measures (i.e. structures displaced, farmland acres lost, etc.) taken from the *Agricultural Resources Technical Report* and other sources, a systematic analysis and calculation of alternate preference scores for each of the twelve highway alignments was completed. These preference scores serve as the basis for the Agriculture Work Group's recommendations to the U.S. Route 20 Advisory Council.

Work Group History

At one of its first meetings in 1993, the Agriculture Work Group elected the following officers:

Chair: Ron Mapes (Stockton)

Advisory Council Representative: Mel Gratton (Galena)

Secretary: John Curtiss (Stockton)

Meetings

1993 Work Group Topics/Activities

Election of officers/adoption of by-laws/mission statement

Membership/voting guidelines

Discussion of issues/concerns related to highway impact on agriculture

Possible "subcommittee" to represent "segments" of the U.S. Route 20 corridor

1994 Work Group Topics/Activities

IDOT presentations: accident statistics, traffic volumes

New highway on existing alignment – feasibility?

Discussion/refinement of agricultural impact issues

Establish corridor segment subcommittee representatives (contact with property owners)

Prime farmland: definition, protective measures

IDOT/property owner relations

1995 Work Group Topics/Activities

Illinois Farm Bureau presentation: land acquisition, appraisal, etc. issues

Agriculture Work Group Survey – NOT conducted due to development of standard impact evaluation methodology for use by all Work Groups (served as input to Agriculture Work Group criteria)

Presentation: property owners experienced with IDOT acquisition procedures

1996 Work Group Topics/Activities

Highway "segment" meetings (individual property owner input) – existing alignment, Snipe Hollow

Joint Work Group meeting – presentation by state/federal agencies concerning their roles (Technical Reports, etc.) in the U.S. Route 20 study

1997 Work Group Topics/Activities

Development of agricultural impact evaluation criteria

Overview (Berger) of Agricultural Resources *Technical Report* procedures and methodology

Mailings to Agriculture Work Group members: impact criteria review, ranking and weighting

Agriculture Work Group membership update – inclusion of participants in highway segment meetings

Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau – input and recommendations regarding Agriculture Impact Criteria

1999 Work Group Topics/Activities

Adoption of Agriculture Work Group Impact Criteria

Discussion – data requirements, availability of measures (impact criteria) – IDOT/Berger representatives

Alternative Alignment Impact Evaluation

Criteria

As a result of Agriculture Work Group activities between 1993 and 1996 (Work Group meetings, presentations by agriculture organization representatives, informal meetings with property owners, etc.), a list of “core” agricultural impact issues was compiled and mailed to members of the Agriculture Work Group for review and comment. Based on response to this mailing, the initial list of eight key impact issues was expanded, and re-stated as 11 Agriculture Impact Criteria. Work Group members were asked to review the revised list and to rank the three most critical issues in terms of potential highway construction impact on agricultural resources and activities in the study corridor.

The results of this survey were tabulated and the Agriculture Work Group adopted the following criteria (including relative weights) as the basis for evaluating the impact of new highway construction along each of the 12 alignments under consideration:

- 1.) Minimize farm-splitting which results in irregularly shaped and landlocked parcels – 27.9%**
- 2.) Minimize disruption of local road networks and access to fields, markets and suppliers – 21.7%**
- 3.) Limit loss of prime and important farmland acreage – 19.5%**
- 4.) Avoid displacement of farm homes and other working structures – 15.8%**
- 5.) Limit the mixing of farm traffic with commercial and tourist traffic – 15.1%**

Measures & Impact Analysis

Once the Impact Criteria had been identified, ranked (relative importance), and adopted by the Agriculture Work Group, it was necessary to determine quantitative measures (for each criterion) for the purpose of comparing alignments in terms of relative impact on agricultural activities. Sources of measurement data included IDOT's Environmental Impact Statement, the Agricultural Resources *Technical Report* and projections of vehicle miles traveled under alternative new four-lane highway construction assumptions.

The impact measures applied to each of the weighted criteria are summarized below:

- 1.) Farm splitting: **severed parcels – number**
- 2.) Disruption of local road networks/access: **adverse travel – miles**
- 3.) Loss of prime & important farmland: **prime & important farmland – acres**
- 4.) Displacement of homes/structures: **farm residences & other structures displaced**
- 5.) Mixing of farm traffic with commercial & tourist traffic: **vehicle miles = daily traffic remaining on the existing roadway after construction of the new four-lane highway**

The attached matrix summarized the results of calculations used to develop an Agricultural Impact Preference Score for each of the twelve proposed highway alignments.

The attached Agricultural Impact Summary table (Source: Agricultural Resources *Technical Report*) includes specific measurement data, which were used to evaluate the impact of the various alternative alignments according to Agriculture Work Group Criteria.

Results & Conclusions

Alternate Preference Scores for the 12 highway alignments range from **7.4 (least impact)** to **10.3 (greatest impact)**.

The alignments which exhibit the **lowest impact** scores, and would thus be considered the **most preferred** alternates based on Agriculture Work Group criteria/weights and *Technical Report* data are:

Alternate #1 (Score: 7.4) Longhollow Freeway w/North Simmons Mound

Alternate #2 (Score 7.7) Longhollow Freeway w/South Simmons Mound

Alternate #5 (Score 7.9) Irish Hollow Tunnel Freeway w/North Simmons Mound

Alternate #8 (Score 7.9) Upper Irish Hollow Tunnel Freeway w/North Simmons Mound

Highway alignments having the **highest agricultural impact scores (least preferred)** are:

Alternate #11 (Score 10.3) Expressway - South Eleroy

Alternate #12 (Score 9.7) Expressway - North Eleroy

Alternate #9 (Score 8.4) Upper Irish Hollow Freeway w/South Simmons Mound

While the Agricultural Impact Evaluation results suggest that the **most preferred** alternate alignments would be the Longhollow Freeway w/ North Simmons Mound, Longhollow Freeway w/South Simmons Mound, Irish Hollow Tunnel Freeway w/North Simmons Mound or Upper Irish Hollow Tunnel Freeway w/North Simmons Mound routes, several other general findings should be noted:

The relatively narrow range of preference scores for the 12 alternative alignments suggests that **major highway improvements will affect the agriculture community significantly, regardless of the alignment selected.**

Those alignments which tend to create adverse travel, displace structures and increase traffic mixing (expressways) have less of an impact on prime farmland. The opposite is true for freeway alternates, which tend to have greater impacts in the area of prime farmland loss.

Although the use of alternative criteria measures would affect preference scores/rankings slightly, the general positions of the most/least preferred alignments remain relatively consistent among the 12 alternates.

AGRICULTURE WORK GROUP
IMPACTS SUMMARY SHEET

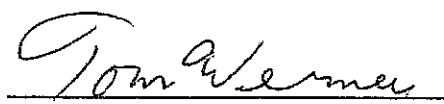
GALENA TO FREEPORT

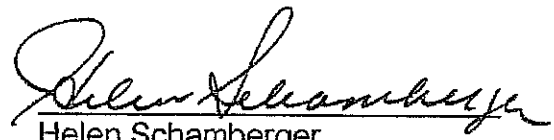
ALTERNATE ALIGNMENTS	CRITERIA (WEIGHT)					ALTERNATE PREFERENCE SCORE
	FARM SPLITTING (27.8%)	LOCAL ACCESS (21.7%)	PRIME FARMLAND (19.5%)	HOME/STR DISPLACE (15.8%)	TRAFFIC MIXING (15.1%)	
1. LONGHOLLOW FREEWAY WITH NORTH SIMMONS MOUND ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	103	98	1,935	131	111,077	7.4
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.0	8.5	7.7	8.4	8.7	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.2	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.0	
2. LONGHOLLOW FREEWAY WITH SOUTH SIMMONS MOUND ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	107	106	1,929	133	111,077	7.7
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.3	7.2	7.7	8.5	8.7	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.3	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.0	
3. IRISH HOLLOW FREEWAY WITH NORTH SIMMONS MOUND ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	105	121	2,252	119	113,355	8.1
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.2	8.2	9.0	7.6	8.8	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.2	1.0	
4. IRISH HOLLOW FREEWAY WITH SOUTH SIMMONS MOUND ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	109	130	2,248	121	113,355	8.2
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.5	8.8	8.9	7.7	8.8	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.4	1.9	1.7	1.2	1.0	
5. IRISH HOLLOW TUNNEL FREEWAY WITH NORTH SIMMONS MOUND ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	101	120	2,188	115	113,355	7.9
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	7.8	8.1	8.7	7.3	8.8	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.2	1.8	1.7	1.2	1.0	
6. IRISH HOLLOW TUNNEL FREEWAY WITH SOUTH SIMMONS MOUND ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	105	129	2,150	117	113,355	8.1
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.2	8.7	8.7	7.5	8.8	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.3	1.9	1.7	1.2	1.0	
7. UPPER IRISH HOLLOW FREEWAY WITH NORTH SIMMONS MOUND ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	110	123	2,142	125	113,355	8.2
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.5	8.3	8.5	8.0	8.8	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.4	1.8	1.7	1.3	1.0	
8. UPPER IRISH HOLLOW TUNNEL FREEWAY WITH NORTH SIMMONS MOUND ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	106	122	2,076	121	113,355	7.9
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.2	8.2	8.3	7.7	8.8	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.3	1.8	1.6	1.2	1.0	
9. UPPER IRISH HOLLOW FREEWAY WITH SOUTH SIMMONS MOUND ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	114	132	2,138	127	113,355	8.4
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.9	8.9	8.5	8.1	8.8	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.5	1.9	1.7	1.3	1.0	
10. UPPER IRISH HOLLOW TUNNEL FREEWAY WITH SOUTH SIMMONS MOUND ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	110	131	2,070	123	113,355	8.1
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.5	8.8	8.2	7.9	8.8	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.4	1.9	1.6	1.2	1.0	
11. EXPRESSWAY SOUTH ELEROY ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	110	130	2,002	170	298,823	10.3
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.5	8.8	8.0	10.9	17.9	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.4	1.9	1.8	1.7	2.7	
12. EXPRESSWAY NORTH ELEROY ALTERNATE						
RAW SCORE	107	141	1,988	183	241,873	9.7
RELATIVE IMPACT SCORE	8.3	9.5	7.9	10.4	14.5	
WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORE	2.3	2.1	1.5	1.6	2.2	
TOTAL RELATIVE IMPACT SCORES	100	100	100	100	100	100
TOTAL WEIGHTED IMPACT SCORES	27.9	31.7	18.5	15.8	15.1	

Note: 1) Raw scores were updated in August 2001.
2) Total scores may vary due to rounding.

U.S. Route 20 Economic Development Work Group

Report to the Advisory Council


Tom Werner
Chairperson


Helen Schamberger
Advisory Council Representative



July 26, 2001

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
WORK GROUP HISTORY.....	2
ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS	2
1993 Activity Highlights	2
1994 - Activity Highlights	2
1995 Activity Highlights	3
1996 Activity Highlights	4
1997 Activity Highlights	4
1998 Activity Highlights	4
1999 Activity Highlights	4
2000-2001 Activity Highlights.....	5
IMPACT CRITERIA.....	5
METHODOLOGY	5
RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS.....	6
IMPACT ANALYSIS.....	6
METHODOLOGY	6
RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS	7
OTHER CRITERIA SCORING SCENARIOS.....	10

Introduction

At a Public Information Meeting on June 17, 1993, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) called for citizens throughout Stephenson and Jo Daviess Counties to become involved in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a four-lane U.S. Route 20 highway, Glacier Shadow Pass, in northwest Illinois.

A total of 179 local residents attended the meeting. Everyone was asked to identify his or her primary area of interest in the region – agriculture, economic development, environment, government or tourism – and join a U.S. Route 20 Work Group to help IDOT assess the impacts of a new four-lane highway.

Those interested in joining a Work Group, around 111 individuals, met in five separate sessions. Each Work Group was asked by a facilitator to name a temporary contact person to coordinate mailings and meeting notices prior to selection of a permanent chairperson and an Advisory Council representative.

Both would serve on the U.S. Route 20 Advisory Council which would assess impacts on the region as a whole and prepare recommendations regarding individual alignments for IDOT at the conclusion of the four-lane highway study. Each Work Group was asked to help identify others who might be interested in joining the public involvement effort.

Further, to carry out their missions, the Work Groups were told they would use data from IDOT's engineering and environmental design technical studies, and any other information they deemed appropriate, to develop and refining criteria against which the proposed four-lane alternates could be evaluated.

In addition, Work Groups were asked to participate in an initial exercise to identify three major concerns, or impacts, of building a four-lane highway on their interest areas. They would report on these issues when they reconvened in the fall.

Participants were told that at the end of the project study, each Work Group would prepare a report outlining its criteria for assessing impacts, and how members weighted and prioritized the criteria, and then utilized them to identify alignments having the fewest negative impacts on their interest areas.

The Advisory Council would utilize the Work Groups' conclusions, along with any other impacts they deemed important and formulate a regional perspective on the effects of impacts from building each alignment. Advisory Council members would prioritize alignments, focusing on those with the fewest negative impacts.

Finally, the Advisory Council would present its conclusions in a report to IDOT at the culmination of the agency's public involvement effort. The document would be included in the final EIS upon which the Federal Highway Administration would base its decision about the construction of a four-lane highway in northwest Illinois.

Thus Work Group members began to meet periodically to carry out the task of impact assessment.

Work Group History

Activity Highlights, 1993 - Present

The Economic Development Work Group met initially to elect officers and discuss its mission, objectives, composition, etc. The Work Group began defining issues, or criteria, of primary interest to the business community in an effort to benefit economic development in the region.

1993 Activity Highlights

The first election of officers resulted in:

Tom Werner, Chairman
Dan Adams, Advisory Council Representative
Helen Schamberger, Secretary

Identification of the Work Group's initial issues for assessing the impact of the highway was completed. They were:

- impact of highway construction on the business community
- a new four-lane highway's impact on commercial (retail) companies
- a new four-lane highway's impact on industrial companies
- impact on individual towns of a new four-lane highway

1994 Activity Highlights

The Work Group's general activities included:

- determining criteria for membership, voting procedures, by-laws, etc.
- reviewing demographic trends in the project area (see appendix)
- obtaining and analyzing sales tax data both before and after the completion of the Freeport Bypass
- obtaining and reviewing the comprehensive plans for towns in the project area
- focusing on the impact of the construction phase of the project on businesses
- obtaining a listing of businesses in Stephenson and Jo Daviess Counties in preparation for the Work Group's Business Transportation Survey
- coordinate a presentation and review plans of the Rockford Airport Regional Transportation Study

One of the primary areas of concentration this year has been acquiring, reviewing, and analyzing various highway bypass studies as outlined below.

Reviewed and analyzed various highway bypass studies produced by the Iowa Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and the University of Minnesota Department of Civil Engineering. These studies examined over 260 communities in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota that experienced a highway bypass in the last thirty years.

It was concluded that there were no long-term adverse economic impacts from bypasses around rural communities. Some highlights of these studies include:

- sales to through travelers make up a smaller portion of the community's business activity than is commonly assumed – approximately 90% of a rural community's total business activity comes from local patrons and local traffic
- communities of over 2,000 residents experience more beneficial impacts than adverse impacts from a highway bypass

- the bypassed business district is a more pleasant place to be – free of through traffic congestion, more accessible parking, increased pedestrian safety, less noise and pollution, etc.
- any loss of through traffic sales are off-set with increased local sales – sales tax records confirm this trend showing retail business in most bypassed communities is sustained (or increased) after the through traffic has been rerouted because of the factors mentioned above
- signage plays a key part in determining actual economic impacts of a highway bypass, in communities where no economic decline occurred, uniform and appropriate signage was sited as the attributing factor

The Bypass Study Committee of the Economic Development Work Group conducted seven public meetings to inform the general public, local business owners, and community leaders of their analysis and conclusions. The meetings were held on:

-08/24/94	Galena
-09/08/94	East Dubuque
-09/13/94	Warren
-09/19/94	Elizabeth
-09/22/94	Hanover
-09/26/94	Lena
-10/25/94	Galena

1995 Activity Highlights

The Work Group's general activities included:

- obtain and review demographic trend data for selected communities in the project area
- meet with local businesses such as Kraft Foods, Atwood Industries, Prime Egg, Stockton Chamber of Commerce Members, etc. to discuss the proposed interchange locations

One of the main activities this year was the development, implementation, and report of the Work Group's Business Transportation Survey that was mailed to 2,795 business owners in the region. Some highlights of the survey include:

- received a 33% response rate which is excellent for a mail-out, mail-back survey
- 90% of the respondents stated they were satisfied with the interchange locations proposed by IDOT
- business owners were not asked if safety is a primary concern, however, 42% of the respondents added write-in comments about safety being a primary concern on the existing Route 20
- 61% of responding businesses stated the completion of a new four-lane highway is important to the future of their business

Another highlight of the year was the Work Group's review of interchange studies prepared by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte regarding the impact on towns when an interstate highway is constructed in the area. Some important points of the studies include:

-a large part of development near predominately rural interchanges consists of highway oriented businesses ... four variables were important in explaining development patterns at interchanges:

- distance to town
- traffic volume
- amount of development prior to the interchange
- distance to the next nearest interchange

The Work Group wanted to sponsor a joint Work Group meeting to review their findings of the Business Transportation Study, Bypass Studies, and Interchange Studies. This possibility was discussed with JDQ Engineers.

1996 Activity Highlights

The main topics of discussion during this year included the identification and revision of the original Work Group issues and determining the methodology to deal with the measurement of these issues / criteria.

A master list of issues / criteria was developed and the first mailing to the membership was completed. This process also helped with updating and revising the membership mailing list.

Due to the untimely passing of Dan Adams, Advisory Council Representative, Work Group elections needed to be held. The elections resulted in Helen Schamberger being elected Advisory Council Representative (from Secretary) and Randy Lansing being elected Secretary.

1997 Activity Highlights

The Work Group needed to analyze the results of the first criteria project mailing and develop and execute the second criteria project mailing. A description of this process and results can be found in the Impact Analysis Criteria section of this report.

Once the criteria were narrowed down to the final four, possible measures and data sources were discussed in great length.

A meeting was held with representatives from the Galena Territory to discuss proposed alignments and interchange locations in the vicinity of the Galena Territory complex.

1998 Activity Highlights

Planning documents from communities in the area that are somewhat current versions were acquired for Berger & Associates. These documents would aid in the preparation of the Draft EIS and the various technical reports.

The Work Group discussed the final criteria in terms of quantifiable vs. non-quantifiable methods for measurement.

Interchange alternative locations were discussed, as was the impact of the number of miles of highway being constructed under traffic. The Work Group requested information from the consultants on the impact on the local economy of the construction phase of the project.

The Work Group Secretary, Randy Lansing, accepted a position as City Manager in Iowa and an election was held. Bill Wolter was elected Secretary.

1999 Activity Highlights

Possible data items that could be used to measure the final criteria were discussed and potential sources identified.

A meeting to discuss proposed interchange locations and a review of the Work Group's activities was held in Freeport. This was co-sponsored by the City of Freeport and was also used to solicit input from the business community on the U.S. Route 20 project.

An interchange meeting was held in Stockton to discuss the potential interchange locations with the local business community.

The issue of 'access to communities' was discussed at an Advisory Council meeting and it was decided that the Economic Development and Government Work Groups should meet to determine how this issue should be dealt with. It was decided that the Government Work Group should deal with this issue, not the Advisory Council.

2000 / 2001 Activity Highlights

With the project's re-start, the Work Group needed to run various scenarios of the criteria impact analysis to finalize and approve the Impact Analysis matrix and the measures used for each criteria. The report to the Advisory Council and the Work Group's recommendation of alignments was completed.

Impact Criteria

To begin assessing the impacts of each four-lane highway alignment, Economic Development Work Group members had to determine what issues, or criteria, were most important in maintaining and promoting economic development in the region.

Methodology

Economic Development Work Group members held public meetings to discuss the impacts that a new four-lane highway might have on economic development in the region. To maintain participant objectivity, those discussions were held prior to the consideration of specific alternate alignments.

Work Group members then refined their initial issues and identified others including:

- maximize the creation of new businesses and jobs
- retain the greatest number of businesses and jobs
- provide for the safest route possible for business related transportation
- maximize the expansion and retention of the area's housing stock
- provide for the highest 'quality of economic life' for the region
- separate the local business traffic from the through traffic as much as possible
- make the scenic beauty of Jo Daviess County a higher priority than the establishment of roadside development
- keep as much business in designated areas established by each community as possible

The officers then polled their members by mail asking them to list additional criteria that would be important to economic development in the region. A second mailing was made to ask individual Work Group members to select their top three criteria and rank them in order of importance, which resulted in the final, weighted criteria, which are listed below.

Criteria 1: Provide for the safest route possible for business related transportation

28.9 Accidents per million miles traveled
rural expressway: 0.620 rural freeway: 0.389
source: IDOT, Division of Traffic Safety (Karen Magee)

The alternates with the least negative impact on economic development would be those with the lowest (therefore safest) accident rates.